IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1.   (Currently Amended) A method for processing graphic information present on mailpieces, whereby the graphic information is acquired, evaluated and stored, and whereby the acquired graphic information is used for physically sorting mailpieces, <u>the method comprising:</u>

~~characterized in that,~~

~~on the basis of a first result of the evaluation of~~ <u>evaluating</u> the graphic information <u>to obtain a first result,</u>

<u>augmenting</u> a database ~~is augmented by~~ <u>with</u> additional sorting features <u>based on the first result,</u>

~~whereby the~~ <u>storing</u> surface video data contained in the graphic information and/or <u>storing a</u> ~~the~~ statistical evaluation ~~are stored,~~

~~and whereby moreover, on the basis of the augmented database,~~ <u>ascertaining</u> a second result of the evaluation ~~is ascertained so that,~~

~~on the basis of the results of the evaluation, the graphic information of~~ <u>sorting</u> a first mailpiece <u>on the basis of the second result</u> ~~is sorted,~~

~~whereby this sorting of the graphic information of the first mailpiece triggers~~ <u>triggering</u> a physical sorting of a second mailpiece <u>based on the graphical information of the first mailpiece,</u>

and ~~furthermore, in that another physical~~ <u>physically</u> sorting of the first mailpiece ~~resulting from~~ <u>based on</u> a reference code ~~is carried out.~~

2.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, comprising ~~characterized in that~~

~~a determination of~~ determining if postage indicia are present on the mailpieces ~~is carried out~~.

3.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~

~~the evaluation of~~ evaluating the graphic information takes place via a data line at a different point in time and/or at a different place than the point in time and/or the place of the physical sorting of the first mailpiece based on ~~resulting from~~ the reference code.

4.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~

~~the evaluation of~~ evaluating the graphic information ~~of the mailpieces~~ comprises a ~~statistical evaluation of~~ statistically evaluating the graphic information ~~present on the mailpieces~~.

5.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, comprising ~~characterized in that~~

verifying the authenticity of sender franking ~~is verified in that~~ by comparing the graphic information present on the mailpieces ~~is compared~~ to the graphic information expected for ~~this~~ a particular mailpiece, whereby ~~the~~ expected graphic information corresponds to a determination that preceded the comparison, and ~~moreover, the~~ registering a postage indicium ~~is registered~~ as being forged if the graphic information ~~at hand~~ present differs from the expected graphic information.

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6. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, <u>comprising</u> ~~characterized in that~~

<u>verifying</u> the authenticity of a digital postage indicium ~~is verified, whereby~~ <u>by</u> <u>deciphering</u> the encoded digital information contained in the graphic information ~~is~~ ~~deciphered~~ and ~~compared to the~~ <u>comparing the encoded digital information to</u> unencrypted graphic information present on the appertaining mailpiece to ~~see if it~~ <u>determine whether the</u> <u>encoded digital information</u> matches <u>the unencrypted graphic information</u> and, if ~~it~~ <u>the</u> <u>encoded digital information</u> does not match <u>the unencrypted graphic information,</u> <u>registering</u> the postage indicium ~~is registered~~ as being forged.

7. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 6, <u>comprising</u> ~~characterized in that~~

<u>generating</u> a <u>first</u> hash value ~~is generated~~ from data contained in the graphic information in order to check whether ~~this~~ <u>the first</u> hash value matches a <u>second</u> hash value contained in the encoded information and, if ~~it~~ <u>the first hash value</u> does not match <u>the second</u> <u>hash value,</u> <u>registering</u> the postage indicium ~~is registered~~ as being forged.

8. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 7, <u>comprising</u> ~~characterized in that~~

<u>forming</u> the <u>first</u> hash value ~~is formed~~ taking into account information about mailpiece data, taking into account a temporarily stored random number and taking into account a loading procedure identification number.

9.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, <u>comprising</u>

~~characterized in that~~

~~the evaluation of~~ <u>evaluating</u> the graphic information ~~of the mailpiece is carried out~~

according to <u>one or more</u> sorting features.

10.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[1]] <u>9</u>, <u>wherein</u>

~~characterized in that~~

~~the~~ <u>a</u> time of day of a sorting event is a sorting feature ~~of the evaluation~~.

11.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[1]] <u>9</u>, <u>wherein</u>

~~characterized in that~~

~~another sorting feature of the evaluation is the~~ <u>a</u> date of a sorting event <u>is a sorting</u>

<u>feature</u>.

12.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[1]] <u>9</u>, <u>wherein</u>

~~characterized in that~~

~~another sorting feature of the evaluation is the~~ <u>a</u> starting time and/or ~~the~~ <u>an</u> ending

time of a sorting event <u>is a sorting feature</u>.

13.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[1]] <u>9</u>, <u>wherein</u>

~~characterized in that~~

~~another sorting feature of the evaluation is the~~ <u>a</u> specification of production machines

in a mail or freight distribution center <u>is a sorting feature</u>.

14.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[1]] 9, wherein

~~characterized in that~~

~~another sorting feature is the~~ a value of the insufficient postage determined by means of the evaluation is a sorting feature.

15.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[1]] 9, wherein

~~characterized in that~~

~~another sorting feature is the~~ a Sender Franking Machine (SFM) ~~AFM~~ identification determined by means of the evaluation is a sorting feature.

16.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 15, wherein

~~characterized in that~~

~~as another sorting feature, it is checked whether~~ the ~~AFM~~ SFM identification ~~is~~ being readable is a sorting feature.

17.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[1]] 15, comprising

~~characterized in that~~

~~as another sorting feature, it is checked~~ checking whether the determined ~~AFM~~ SFM identification is present in a negative file.

18.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[1]] 15, comprising

~~characterized in that~~

~~as another sorting feature, it is checked~~ checking whether the determined ~~AFM~~ SFM identification is present in a positive file.

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19.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[1]] 15, comprising characterized in that

as another sorting feature, it is checked checking whether this is a case of AFM the SFM has insufficient postage.

20.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[1]] 15, comprising characterized in that

as another sorting feature, it is checked checking whether the AFM SFM currency is readable.

21.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[1]] 15, comprising characterized in that

as another sorting feature, it is checked checking whether the AFM SFM postage indicium is readable.

22.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[1]] 9, comprising characterized in that

as another sorting feature, the checking a date of a Personal Computer Franking PCF ("PCF date") is as a sorting feature checked.

23.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[1]] 9, comprising characterized in that

as another sorting feature, it is checked checking whether a Personal Computer Franking PCF version ("PCF version") is present as a sorting feature.

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24.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[1]] 9, comprising ~~characterized in that~~

~~as another sorting feature, it is checked~~ checking whether Personal Computer Franking ~~PCF~~ insufficient postage ("PCF insufficient postage") is present as a sorting feature.

25.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[1]] 9, comprising ~~characterized in that~~

~~as another sorting feature, it is checked~~ checking whether a determined Personal Computer Franking ~~PCF~~ is present in a negative file ("PCF in negative file") as a sorting feature.

26.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, comprising ~~characterized in that~~

storing data ~~of the~~ from automated checking of the postage ~~is stored~~.

27.   (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, comprising ~~characterized in that~~

storing results of the evaluation of graphic information ~~are stored~~ in a database.

28. (Currently Amended) A device for processing graphic information present on the surfaces of mailpieces comprising:

~~one or more~~ an image processing unit ~~units~~, whereby the image processing ~~units have~~ unit has a device ~~means~~ for acquiring, evaluating and storing the graphic information ~~of mailpieces~~, and ~~having~~ has at least one device ~~means~~ for recognizing different types of postage of the mailpieces, whereby the image processing ~~units~~ unit as well as the device ~~means~~ for recognizing the types of postage are in a data network,

~~characterized in that~~

wherein the data network is connected to at least one device ~~means~~ for performing a physical sorting of mailpieces, at least one device ~~means~~ for generating a reference code, and at least one device ~~means~~ for evaluating the graphic information, so that the at least one device ~~means~~ for evaluating the graphic information of a first mailpiece ascertains a first result of the evaluation, whereby the data network is also connected to a database that ~~has been~~ is augmented by ~~an additional~~ a sorting feature on the basis of the first result of the evaluation of the graphic information, for determining a second result of the evaluation, and ~~additionally,~~ at least one device ~~means~~ for performing the physical sorting of a second mailpiece is activated, whereby ~~another~~ a second physical sorting of the first mailpiece is carried out on the basis of ~~the~~ a reference code.

29. (Currently Amended) The device according to claim 28, wherein ~~characterized in that~~

the at least one device ~~means~~ for evaluating the graphic information of the mailpieces is located inside and/or outside of a mail distribution center.

30. (Currently Amended) The device according to claim 28, <u>wherein</u> ~~characterized in that~~

<u>the</u> at least one <u>device</u> ~~means~~ for evaluating the graphic information of the mailpieces has at least one input device ~~as well as~~ <u>and</u> at least one display device so that evaluation results ~~as well as~~ <u>and</u> surface video data of the mailpieces are displayed to a user and edited by the user employing the input device.

31. (Currently Amended) The device according to claim 30, <u>wherein</u> ~~characterized in that~~

~~conventional~~ <u>the at least one display device comprises</u> analog and/or digital video equipment ~~is used as display devices~~.

32. (Currently Amended) The device according to claim 30, <u>comprising</u> ~~characterized in that~~

PC-based display devices ~~are used~~ that allow a filtering of the video data and ~~thus~~ a detailed depiction of specific segments of the video data.

33. (Currently Amended) The device according to claim 30, <u>wherein</u> ~~characterized in that~~

the <u>at least one</u> input ~~devices~~ <u>device</u> ~~consist~~ <u>is selected from the group consisting</u> of PC keyboards, numerical keypads, barcode scanners ~~and/or~~ <u>and a device</u> ~~means~~ for speech recognition.

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